

## "Meandering Through The Labyrinthine Maze: Muslim Diasporic Consciousness In Pre-9/11 And Post-9/11 Attack Of Terror"

Dr Malay Saha, Srikantabati, P.S.S.Shikshaniketan

*Assistant Teacher*

*Raghunathganj Murshidabad West Bengal India*

*Corresponding Author: Malay Saha*

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**ABSTRACT:** The literature of the diaspora in many ways records the basic human desire for survival as well as the 'urge of becoming' overcoming the stiff resistance and confrontations that the host countries and communities had have inflicted upon the small yet strong-willed people. The Muslim communities all over the world had faced stiff challenges from time time and asserted themselves and their love for freedom in many literary pieces. In the wake of 9/11 attack of terror on America, Muslim diaspora all over the world, especially in the Western countries has been subjected to humiliation and alienation. The Western countries have become conservative in their outlook of the Muslim communities all over the world. In the name of safeguarding the national cause, the governments of the western countries have been over-board. The people of the Muslim diaspora have calmly weathered the ignominy and resisted the western dubbing in their writings. This article aims at probing the Muslim diasporic consciousness in pre and post 9/11 time through the eyes of both the Muslim diasporic writers and the western writers. It also aims at unravelling the fractured, battered psyche of the Muslim diasporic people as is revealed in the multifarious discourses of the writers.

**KEY WORDS:** 'muslim', '9/11', 'terrorism', 'alienation', 'resistance'.

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Date of Submission: 16-07-2018

Date of acceptance: 31-07-2018

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Simon Turner in his "Diaspora, Conflict and Security" argues that 'diaspora' is a deterritorialising and subversive phenomena. Therefore, the notion of diasporic consciousness should always be a dynamic one. It is a matter of fixing identity and stabilizing, making and remaking of the identities, altering in relation to time and place. This kind of conceptualization of diaspora could be well illustrated if we take into consideration the changing status of Muslim diaspora around the world, especially in the western countries.

The immigrant Muslims in Europe and the America did not have much political or economic power. Therefore, they were discriminated from the mainstream societies. Though, the muslim diasporic people resided in the host countries, they were never really integrated into the mainstream societies of the U.S.A, Australia, Germany, Norway, France or other European host nations. The immigrants engaged themselves in menial jobs and earned their livelihood. Though the immigrants rose economically, their social status remained the same. The immigrant Muslims were culturally different and were bad mixers. So, alienation, suspicion, discrimination, identity crisis were inevitable. Many writers belonging to the Muslim community felt being segregated and slighted and wrote about their existential crisis in their works. In their writing different writers of the diaspora took different strategies and from time to time they found their existence marred by the hostile surroundings.

Within the Muslim minority context, the young adult experience is an emerging discourse in recent times. It occupies a central position in Muslim diasporic writing. Jamilah in Randa Abdel Fateh's "Ten Things I Hate About Me" is an Australian girl of Lebanese Muslim parentage. Conscious of her ethno-religious background, Jamilah imitates the white Australians. But instead of realignment with the mainstream society, she suffers alienation and faces repercussion. Jamilah's is a case of the 'minority within'. By trying to identify herself with the mainstream Australian society, she becomes a victim of alienation, displacement and identity crisis. She feels herself a stranger even among her own people. Bayat and Herro(2010:5) rightly points out:

**There is more to the lives of the Muslim youth[.....] than mere religiosity, conservative cultural politics and extension. Despite common elements of identification and cultural specifications, Muslim youth have as much in common with their non-Muslim global counterparts as they share among themselves.**

(Bayat and Herro. 5)

In "They Die Strangers", the controversial Yemeni-Ethiopian writer Mohammad Abdul Wali focuses on the vital experiences of a Yemeni emigrant in Ethiopia. The protagonist of the novel Abdou Sa'id feels perpetually "disfranchised, marginalized and unhomed" (Bhaba. 12) when he migrates to Christian majority Ethiopia. With a view to assimilating with the mainstream culture Abdou surrenders himself to the new environment and culture. He gets entangled into a series of amorous relationships that is forbidden in his religion. His sense of faith is more or less obliterated when it is used as a means of evading taxes. Disillusionment becomes complete for the protagonist when he is asked to take care of his illegitimate child from his illicit relationship.

One of the main challenges that the Muslim diasporic people face in the Great Britain, the U.S.A. and probably elsewhere in the world is that they are stereotyped as Islamic fundamentalists. This misrecognition greatly affected the Muslims in the whole world and particularly to the Muslims in the western countries. The writers of the Muslim diaspora challenged this stereotype, but this ethno-religious misrecognition, marginalisation got worse post 9/11 attack of terror on the U.S.A and humiliating steps of 'securitisation' were taken against the said diaspora in many countries.

Truly Muslim diasporic consciousness has suffered a set-back post 9/11 terror attack. Besides being the so called 'other' or 'subaltern', the Muslims are now bearing the added appendage of terrorists dubbed on them by the Western people, especially the people of the U.S.A. As a result, Muslim diasporic people have been marginalised, alienated and looked down upon. It is against this back-ground that Muslim diasporic consciousness have been pushing itself forward. Naturally, therefore, Muslim diasporic voice bears grievous wounds. The writers of the Muslim diasporic community wants to inspect what impact has the 9/11 incident left on them and their lives.

The American author Don DeLillo's "Falling Man" tells the story of Keith Neudecker, a middle aged man who has lived through the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The majority of the book deals with the life after the incident and how he copes with the violence he has witnessed further. The book received positive review for its provocative description of terrorist attacks and mental impact it can have upon a survivor.

Migration of any kind bears with it issues of alienation, marginalisation, assimilation and so on, but after the famed terror attack on the U.S.A. on 9th September, 2011, the topic has brought issues of religion within its periphery, representing the Muslim diasporic people as a threat to their lives. Such like discourses could be found in the works of writers like Khaled Hosseini, John Updike, Mahsin Hamid, Salmon Rushdie, Monica Ali, Tahmina Anan, Kiran Desai and so on.

The Muslim migrants or diasporic people in the western countries engages themselves in challenges that was necessitated after the 9/11 incident. As a result, the attempt at reshaping the fractured diasporic Muslim psyche is made because the community faces barbs of questions on a number of socio-political and religious issues. Within a very short span the 9/11 incident developed into a contested and troubled genre. Azar Nafisi's "Reading Lolita in Tehran" and Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns" are very successful works of the Muslim diaspora. "Reading Lolita in Tehran" is a memoir told through literature. It shifts in time, but it is a complete story of one woman's experience in Tehran before, during and after the revolution. After the huge success of "The Kite Runner", Khaled Hosseini produced another stunning work with his "A Thousand Splendid Suns". The book describes the stigma that the illegitimate child Mariam suffers surrounding her birth and abuse she faces throughout her marriage. A few critics have upheld the view that the surprising success of Khaled and Nafisi is greatly due to the fact that both of them unconditionally subscribe to the views advocated by the mainstream American political ideology that perpetuates the superiority of the West and denigrates the East as irrational. Both Nafisa and Khaled work within a New Orientalist binary concept.

The writers belonging to the Muslim diaspora also adopted the writing back strategy and challenged the prejudiced misconception of the Muslim diaspora. The British Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid used such a strategy. In Hamid's "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" we have the story of a Pakistani Princeton graduate who recalls his life in the U.S.A. and narrates it to a putative American visitor to Lahore in the form of a dramatic monologue. Changez tells his experience of holding a coveted position at a New York private firm Underwood Samson and his love for an American woman Erica. Changez here narrates how the incident of 9/11 radically altered the perception of the people of the American society about the Muslim diaspora. After the death of the boy-friend of Erica in Afghanistan, Erica severed her tie with Changez and committed suicide. Followed by a trip to Chile, Changez had quit his job and returned to Pakistan. What Hamid tries to do is that he proposes an alternative sanitized way of destabilizing Muslim ethos through identification with other embattled Third World Nations. In the works of the South African writer Ishtiyak Shukri we find the western recognition of the Muslim diaspora from the point of view of multiculturalism and orientalism. His "The Silent Miniaret" deals with the story of a South African Indian Muslim young man Issa who had been doing PhD on Muslim diaspora and who is lost in London. The novel looks back and forth - the past in the South Africa and the present in London. Issa possessed a mind that was tempered by apartheid activism. Issa's life was deeply affected by the war in Iraq.

Issa's mother, brother and his friends all pieces together his life to search him out. In this work Sukhri searches for a web of connections to find out the right mind for resistance against colonialism and apartheid.

## II. CONCLUSION

Patrick Buchanan in his "Suicide of Superpower: Will America Survive to 2025" presents the overtly suspicious stand of the western countries towards the Muslim diasporas not only in their countries, but also towards the Muslims all over the world specially of Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libiya, Syria, Somalia and so on. The colonial mind-set had made them indifferent to the suffering of the Muslims in their countries. The Islamophobia has made them so bold and intolerant that they violated even the basic human rights of the immigrant Muslims.

The world has changed. Today we live in a world that is peopled by the people of different cultures, ideologies and religions. No country or race can shut its door on the people of other countries because physical boundaries or borders have blurred to a great extent. No country can remain cut off from the outside world for long. A greater transnational understanding, understanding of the cross-cultural divergence and a philanthropic attitude towards human beings is necessary. There is also a greater need of vigorous, intensive and wide ranging dialogue between the conflicting parties, especially the West and the Islamic countries to promote greater understanding. The former president of Pakistan Nawaz Shariff observed that conflict is never an answer to the threat to World Peace. In "Islam and the West" he wrote:

**Islam is a religion, a community of believers, the ummah, and cannot be defeated by the collapse of some states in the same way fascism and communalism were defeated. Nor can Judaism, nor the holocaust, nor could early Christianity by the Roman empire. (Shariff.34)**

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